THE ART OF ENAMELING

Copyright, 1927, by Fireside Industries, Inc.

LESSON FOUR

2022.13.140

I take up first the art of enamel decorating for several reasons; it is rather simple, and yet it must contain many of the most important elements of color harmony, composition, blending, contrasts, etc. When you have learned all that I have to teach you on this subject, you will have mastered many of the principles that govern applied arts. The next and most important reason for taking enameling first is that it enables you at once to get into production on work from which you will derive profit. You will notice a large number of articles listed in the catalog of supplies that can be decorated with enamel and made ready for sale even though one has had very little previous training.

The art of enameling is relatively new and the popularity which it enjoys is due to its great possibilities as a medium for decorating. Its introduction has made it possible to beautify useful things and create a demand for the hitherto plain and ungainly article of common use.

But if this kind of decorating has opened a new field for the decorator, it has also enabled him to originate articles, the decoration of which will reflect his individuality and skill.

This art of decorating enjoys great popularity in Europe, particularly in the Scandinavian countries. For centuries these countries, especially Sweden and Norway, have given the world beautiful examples of their decorative genius. To the peasantry is largely due the perfecting of this art.

These people are known for their industry, mechanical ability, and, incidentally, for an inborn taste for brilliant colors. When the wintry winds made their labor in the fields a hardship, they would occupy themselves with the decorating of simple objects, fashioned by hand or some simple forged tools of their own making, that were a credit to their ingenuity.

The color of the wood of these different articles was left bare and formed a light background for decorating. In some cases they were so enthusiastic that their decorating was overdone, with the result that they produced an over elaboration of design. I have seen hall clocks that were decorated in this fashion with an all-over pattern.

The secret of enameling was not perfected as it is today, and they had recourse to pigments which had to be covered with a coat of varnish.

The enamel of today is water-proof, and articles decorated with this medium may be washed in soapsuds. It is durable, practical and sanitary owing to the fact that its surface becomes solid and tile-like and is therefore immune from dirt and grease. Its quick drying, easy flowing qualities make it an excellent medium to work with. It does not deteriorate under temperature. However, it dries to best advantage under a temperature of about 75 degrees.

The object to enamel or decorate should be gone over lightly with fine sandpaper 00 to smooth all rough spots. The objects we carry are all very carefully made, yet it is never possible to be absolutely sure that all irregularities have been eliminated, therefore this practice is necessary. Be sure to dust off the article thoroughly before starting to paint it.

In decorating wooden novelties you will put on two coats of "undercoat," and then one coat of enamel for a finish or this process may be reversed; i. e., you may use one coat of "undercoat" and two of eggshell. These are listed in our materials catalog.

What is this undercoat? It is simply a flat paint of the same general color as the enamel to be applied last.

The undercoat paints we furnish are quick drying. Paints you might purchase at your local stores would take twenty-four hours for each coat to dry. Otherwise they would be about the same as ours, but likely more expensive.

What is this undercoat for? It is simply to form a foundation for the final coat of enamel that will be smooth and bring out the color of the final finishing coat in its true shade.

Although it is a good plan to use the same color undercoat as eggshell or lacquer enamel, it is not necessary to do so, except when painting furniture. In the latter case, if the same color undercoat as eggshell is used, scratches and indentations won't appear as readily. White or ivory undercoat may be used under any light colored enamel, and black undercoat may be used under any extremely dark enamel.

Always sandpaper all painted surfaces before applying another coat. Why? In order to remove brush marks and runs, and give a perfectly smooth surface for the following coat. Do not neglect this: Use 0 or 00 sandpaper. For flat surfaces wrap it around a flat block of wood. Sandpaper in the direction of the grain. Break all edges, that is to say, sandpaper around those edges lightly to avoid any sharp corners. Be sure to brush off every particle of sand dust.

As enamel contains varnish it will flow readily, thus eliminating brush marks. But beware of runs—do not use an excess of enamel and you will avoid them. Small, flat objects should be laid flat to dry.

In applying any coat, either undercoat or top coat, go over the surface of the wood against the grain and then go over it with your brush with the grain to get an even surface. The first coat may be much thinner than the succeeding ones.

The treatment of articles made out of rough grained wood like oak and mahogany will be somewhat different from those made out of birch, basswood and gum, such as *Fireside Industries* furnishes. The pores or grain of oak and mahogany must be filled with a primary coat of white shellac. Shellac may be used very thin and will require only an hour or two to dry. However, it is advisable in particular work to allow it to dry for a few hours longer, so as to avoid the shrinkage which would take place should the enamel be applied too soon. When articles made of fairly thin wood are given a coat of shellac, it should be applied over the entire article. Otherwise warping might result.

Your Greatest Chance for Success—Where Is It?

Develop your own resources—the resources that lie within you.

Many go through a life of mediocrity because they have not discovered themselves. We all of us have enormous possiblities for achievement — but most of us never start on the voyage of discovery to find ourselves.

Many men ad women look back after they have reached middle life and are disappointed that the rosy dreams of youth have not materialized into the success they looked forward to. They wonder what is the magic key that leads to success and to fortune. They do not realize that deep within their own natures lies the untold wealth of resource, locked as by a key, and waiting for the proper stimulus to open the doors and allow it to escape to the surface.

Some men are developed in a crisis. For forty years U. S. Grant had been a medioc-

rity. He had tried many things without success. The Civil War was the stimulus that developed his flinty character and made him a man of history.

Napoleon Bonaparte was an unknown student. Without friends, without resources, he had contemplated suicide to escape from a life that held no charm. When a throne tottered, when Civil War threatened the Empire, he rose to the surface. This was the stimulus that developed his latent powers and made him one of the greatest figures in the world.

But you do not need a crisis of this character. Men and women everywhere are finding themselves every day, unlocking their hidden resources. While some sit on the side lines and wonder what is the magic formula that changes a bank clerk to a financier, a peddler to a steel king, a plowboy to a president, a carpenter to a master painter, others of no great ability are plunging into their self-appointed tasks, and doing the very things that those who sit on the side lines say are impossible.

Your greatest resources are within you, locked away, waiting for you to find the stimulus that will unlock them. What you have accomplished may be but the mere shadow of what you are capable of. How do you know there is not a great artist, a great inventor, a great merchant, locked away within you?

This work you are now engaged in may strike the spark that will make your name ring round the world. Many young people say "If I could only be sure. If I could be certain that steady unremitting toil for the years would win for me I would begin this minute." I can tell you here and now, if there is one thing you can be sure of, it is that you will never find your hidden possibilites until you search for them and dig for them. They do not lie on the surface.

Pampered youth never succeeds. It may be forced into an easy berth in some great organization, but in a short time its failings and shortcomings have forced it down and out. Few rich men's sons become outstanding figures in the world's affairs.

So it is up to you. Do not bewail your poverty. It is one of your greatest assets. Seek to discover yourself. Throw yourself into any situation that confronts you. It may seem impossible of solution, but it is not. There is an answer for every problem. By solving it you will have unlocked one of the doors that lead to your inner being—to the riches greater than gold at your command.

The first step to success is self-discovery. Keep digging away at your inner consciousness as a prospector digs away at his undiscovered mine. You may be even now on the verge of an important discovery. To give up would be to lose the fame or fortune that awaits you in the next ten feet of tunneling.

Work, study, exercise your faculties. These are the tools with which you strike the bonanza of hidden riches in yourself.

Design Practice

In designing, several points should be kept in mind.

1. All designs must be made for practical use.
2. The article to decorate must lend itself to decoration, in space and form.
3. The design must fit a given space.
4. An applied design must be based on good constructive principles.
5. The nature of the material will be kept in mind and the design appropriately chosen.

6. The design must not necessarily be confined to a certain form or shape but must allow individual interpretation.

7. The color of the background must be studied as to its relation to the design and must be given due care and consideration.

I have kept these points in mind while designing the plates in this course of study.

Some of the designs are so constructed as to be used on divers articles of the shape specified. For example, the design that will fit a candy box will be appropriate for the decoration of a tray, a bread board or any circular shaped article whether of wood or metal. The design may be enlarged or reduced to fit any given size.

Some of the designs are for a square shape and will fit not only a square top box but also, if enlarged, an oilcloth pillow top, and other square shaped articles too numerous to mention. Now and then you will find plates constructed on purely conventional lines and in flat tones, others in a semi-naturalistic fashion and stencil-like in character. I have endeavored to get effectiveness in each design, combined with a minimum of labor.

Design Practice

In Lesson One I have explained fully the different methods used in the tracing of practically any design problem you may encounter in your work, and in Lesson Two I have given you a color key for reference.

Now to further the knowledge you have gained, I will ask you to trace the simple design shown on Plate 1, and paint it according to the scheme of colors indicated by their respective numbers.

This is a semi-conventional design, and will be painted in flat tones; i. e., without shading. You will use one of your small brushes, and paint it with enamel in the colors stated.

You will notice that the petals of the flowers are treated individually, and in somewhat irregular masses or spots. Instead of outlining each of these forms in black as you have done with your other plates, you will leave around each unit of the design a bare line, or, to express the same idea a little differently, a narrow margin *about* one-sixteenth of an inch in width of uncolored practice board should be left around every form. In a few places you won't be able to make the margin as wide as one-sixteenth of an inch in width on account of the units being very close together. In that case, make it as wide as the space between the units will permit. As these uncolored borders are to take the place of outlines, they should be narrow and uniform in width. They should be left on the outside of the tracing lines and not on the inside. Before starting to paint, it is well to indicate this space very lightly with a pencil so that you may be sure to keep it absolutely even. Be sure to cover the tracing lines with enamel. Omit black outlines on this plate except on both sides of the white border.

This plate calls for a background. Backgrounds may be painted over the entire surface first of all, or the design may be painted and the background filled in later. When the background is light I would advise you always to put it in first, for you will find it easier to get it on smoothly in that way. When the background is dark you may follow either method. If you paint it on first you will have to have light carbon paper with which to trace on your design afterwards. If you wish to, you may use your largest brush, but be sure and clean it thoroughly afterwards so it will be in good condition for Lesson Twenty-two on Batik. Use your brush full of enamel that is about

the consistency of thick cream. Start in one corner of the background, and as far as possible, make all the strokes in one direction. Remember always that two coats of rather thin enamel will be better than one of thick. Let the first coat dry thoroughly before applying the second.

Applying the background smoothly in Plate 1 will be one of your most difficult assignments, because as each motif is to be left with an uncolored outline, you can not paint over the entire surface with large, bold strokes of your brush. You will have to leave the uncolored borders as explained above. Stir your gray paint frequently.

Do not use your enamel too thin as it might spread and would mar the pleasing effect that comes from neat work.

You will treat the leaves with the same care and treatment as the flowers.

Plate 2 is an interpretation of a spray of flowers treated in a semi-conventional way. You will note the pleasing combination of colors and the well balanced color values introduced in this design. Outline it in black. No background is called for.

Plate 3, which is a design to be rendered in flat tones, may be applied to any flat surface whether wood, cardboard, or metal. This design will be appropriate for the decoration of a flat box top, or will furnish an attractive color note to the wall space when painted on cardboard or heavy drawing paper and framed in a thin gold or light colored enamel moulding. Occasionally you may find a form that has no number on it, e. g., where a flower has several petals but one is numbered. In such a case you would, of course, color the unnumbered units the same shade as the numbered ones, and that is a general rule for you—when a unit has no number, paint it the same color as corresponding units. In Plate 3, there are a few spaces between the flowers that are not numbered. These may be painted green.

You will trace this design onto a sheet of practice board and paint it with enamels in the colors stated on the plate. You may use a ruler to guide you in making straight lines. The border will be more effective if outlined in black. If you use a ruler to guide you in putting on the black outline, do not let the point of your brush or pen come into contact with the ruler as that will cause a smear. One way to avoid this is to use a ruler with a beveled edge and to place the unnumbered side face down on the paper. In this way the edge of the ruler will be elevated above the surface of the paper and will be prevented from coming into contact with the point of the brush or pen.

Do not attempt to shade any of the flowers or leaves, but rely on the combinations and harmony of colors to furnish the "snap" expected of a decoration of this sort. The centers of the small flowers numbered "4," "16," and "42" should be colored the same as the rest of the flower. Outline all the units of these flowers and leaves in black—either enamel or ink as explained in Lesson One.

You may paint a narrow yellow border all around this plate to give it a finished appearance.

Masses and backgrounds indicated in black on the original plate will be rendered in that color in all of your work.

You will trace and paint these three plates and return for criticsms.

Brushes

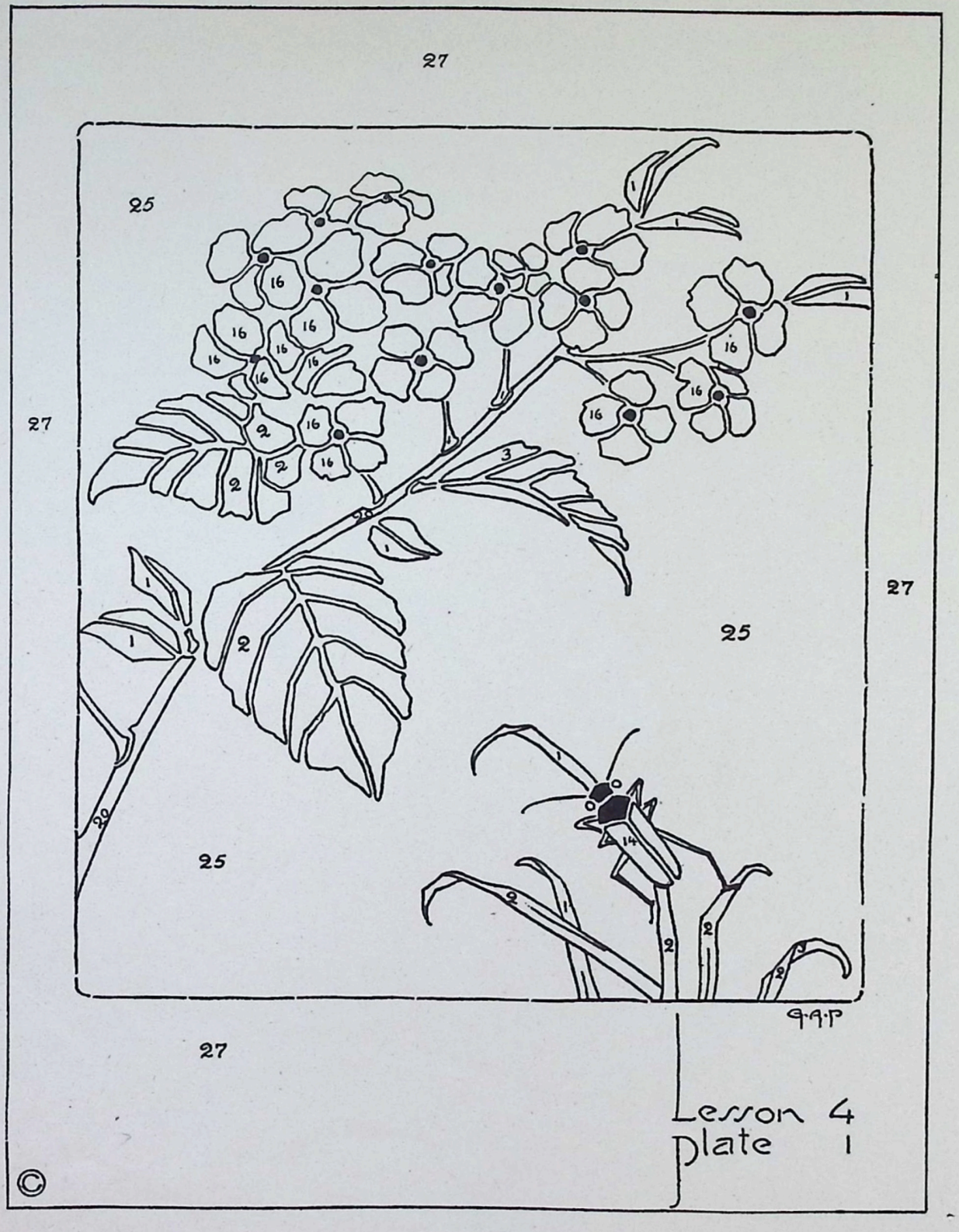
Some members attempt to use their practice brushes for decorating wooden novelties. Although these brushes are good in quality they are too small for decorating large

novelties, especially for putting in the backgrounds. For such work you will want one of the larger brushes listed in your catalog of Art Novelties and Artists' Supplies. The little brushes, such as you received in your kit box are, however, very satisfactory for putting in small designs either on the practice plates or on the novelties themselves.

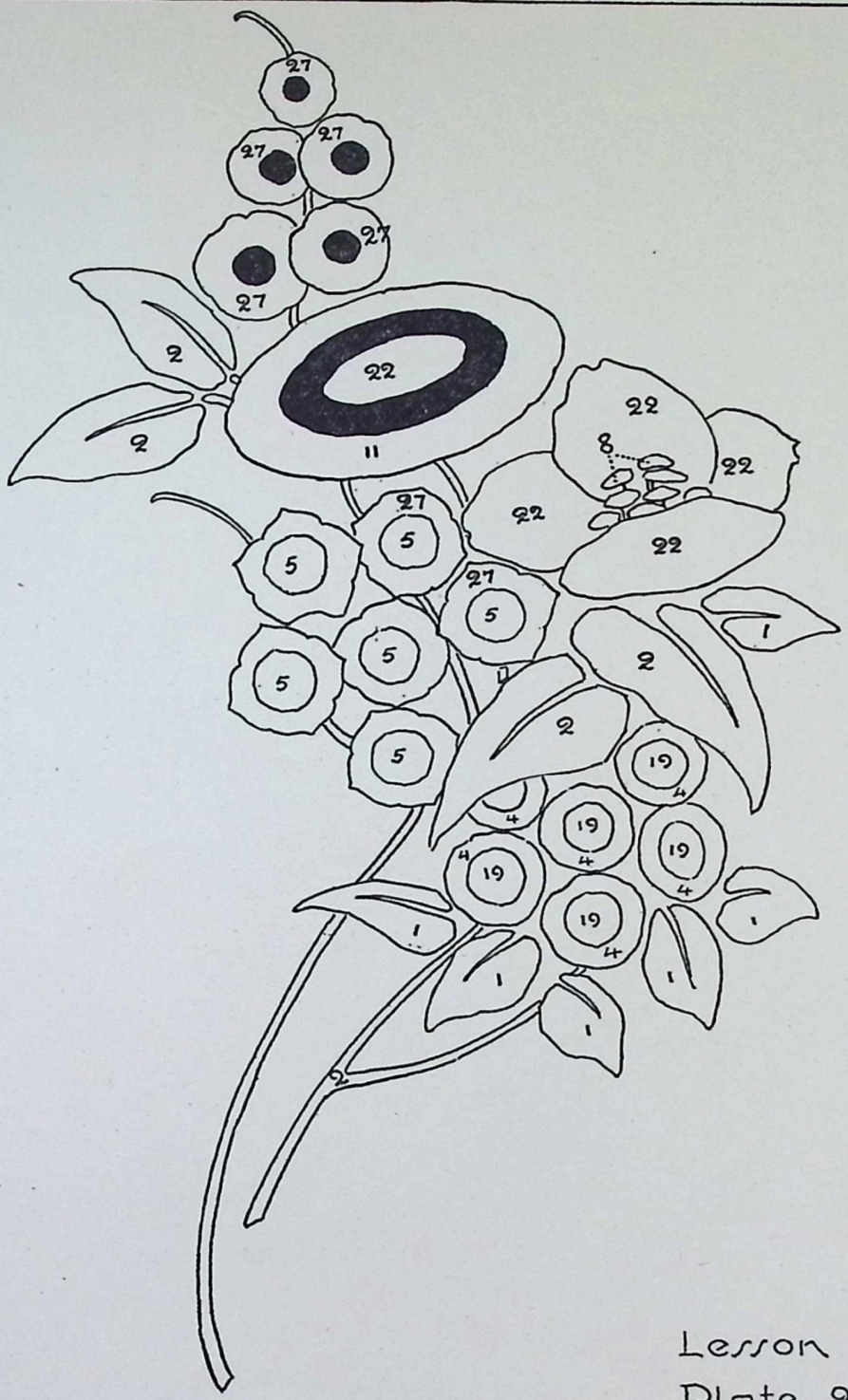
When using larger brushes you will naturally need the larger cans of paint also. The openings in your little outfit cans aren't large enough for a "grown up" brush.

Gabriel André Petit

DESIGN PRACTICE.



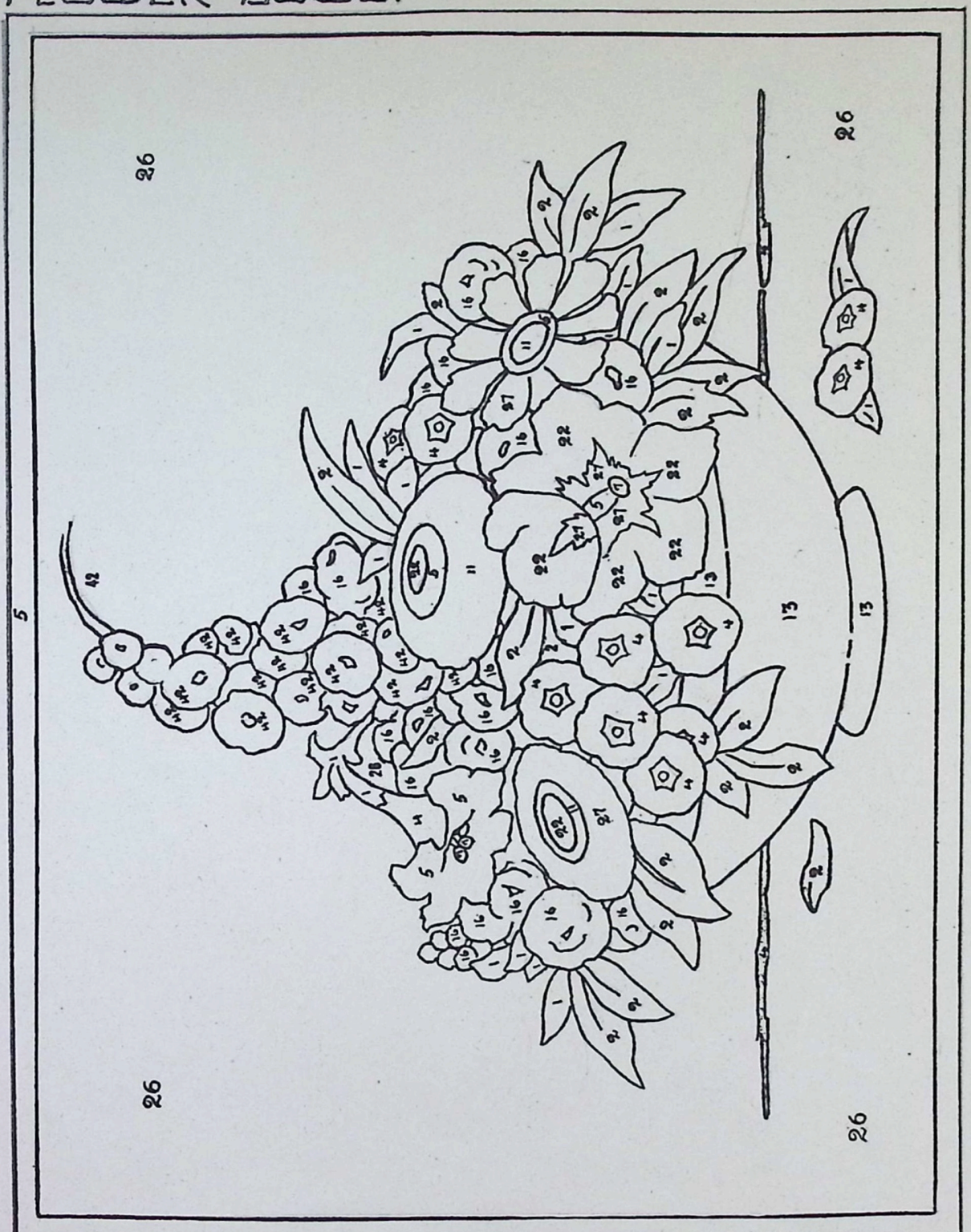
SPRAY



Lesson 4
Plate 2 ©

G.A.P.

FLOWER-BOWL.



Lesson 4 Pl. 3

SMCF22070092